

### REMARKS

Applicants request favorable reconsideration and allowance of the subject application in view of the preceding amendments and the following remarks.

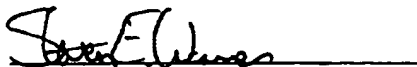
Claims 1-25 are presented for consideration. Claims 1, 7, 15, 17, 18, 20-22 and 24 are independent. Claims 22-25 have been added to recite additional features of the subject invention. Support for these claims can be found in the original application, as filed. Therefore, no new matter has been added.

Claims 1-21 were previously allowed in this application. In addition to these claims being allowable, Applicants submit that claims 22-25 should be deemed allowable for patentably defining features of the electrode plate, the charged-particle beam exposure apparatus and the device manufacturing method of the present invention.

Applicants submit, therefore, that the instant application is in condition for allowance. Favorable consideration and an early Notice of Allowance are requested.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should be directed to our address listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Steven E. Warner", is written over a horizontal line.

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